

Locally made denim trousers are available throughout Europe and Asia for under \$10, but "genuine" jeans made by Levi Strauss, priced at \$50 to \$100, are preferred as a status symbol. Millions of second-hand Levis are sold each year in Asia, especially in Japan and Thailand, with most priced between \$100 and \$1,000. Even in the face of the globalization of popular culture such as wearing jeans, some local variation persists: according to sellers of used jeans, Asians especially prefer Levi's 501 model with a button fly rather than a zipper. And within the United States the button fly is more common on the West Coast, whereas easterners prefer the zipper fly because it doesn't let in cold air.

Jeans became an obsession and a status symbol among youth in the former Soviet Union when the Communist government prevented their import. Gangs would attack people to steal their American-made jeans, and authentic jeans would sell for \$400 on the black market. Ironically, jeans were brought into the Soviet Union by the elite, including diplomats, bureaucrats, and business executives—essentially those who were permitted to travel to the West. These citizens obtained scarce products in the West and resold them inside the Soviet Union for a considerable profit.

The scarcity of high-quality jeans was just one of many consumer problems that were important motives in the dismantling of Communist governments in Eastern Europe around 1990. Eastern Europeans, who were aware of Western fashions and products—thanks to television—could not obtain them, because government-controlled industries were inefficient and geared to producing tanks rather than consumer-oriented goods (see Chapter 11).

With the end of communism, jeans can now be imported freely into Russia. Levi Strauss opened a store in the center of Moscow that sells jeans for about \$50, about a week's wage for a typical Russian. In an integrated global economy, prominent symbols of popular culture have diffused around the world. Access to these products is now limited primarily by lack of money rather than government regulation.

Ironically, as access to Levi's increased around the world, American consumers turned away from the brand. Sales plummeted from \$7 billion in 1996 to \$4 billion in 2004, the year Levi's closed its last U.S. factory. To reclaim lost consumers in the United States, Levi's has tried to market jeans equipped with an iPod remote control and docking station fitted in the pocket.

## Popular Food Customs

Popular culture flourishes where people in a society have sufficient income to acquire the tangible elements of popular culture and the leisure time to make use of them. People in a country with a more developed economy are likely to have the income, time, and inclination to facilitate greater adoption of popular culture.

**ALCOHOL AND FRESH PRODUCE.** Consumption of large quantities of alcoholic beverages and snack foods are characteristic of the food customs of popular societies. Nonetheless, the amounts of alcohol and snacks consumed, as well as preferences for particular types, vary by region within MDCs, such as the United States.

Americans choose particular beverages or snacks in part on the basis of preference for what is produced, grown, or imported locally. Bourbon consumption in the United States is concentrated in the Upper South, where most of it is produced. Rum consumption is heavily concentrated on the East Coast, where it arrives from the Caribbean, whereas Canadian whiskey is preferred in communities contiguous to Canada (Figure 4-12). Southerners may prefer pork rinds because more hogs are raised there, and northerners may prefer popcorn and potato chips because more corn and potatoes are grown there.

However, cultural backgrounds also affect the amount and types of alcohol and snack foods consumed. Alcohol consumption relates partially to religious backgrounds and partially to income and advertising. Baptists and Mormons, for example, drink less than do adherents of other denominations. Because Baptists are concentrated in the Southeast and Mormons in Utah, these regions have relatively low consumption rates. Nevada has a high rate because of the heavy concentration of gambling and other resort activities there. Texans may prefer tortilla chips because of the large number of Hispanic Americans there, and westerners may prefer multigrain chips because of greater concern for the nutritional content of snack foods.

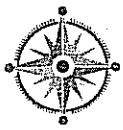
Geographers cannot explain all the regional variations in food preferences. Why do urban residents prefer Scotch, and New Englanders consume nuts? Why is per capita consumption of snack food one-third higher in the Midwest than in the West? Why does consumption of gin and vodka show little spatial variation within the United States?

In general, though, consumption of alcohol and snack foods is part of popular culture primarily dependent on two factors—high income and national advertising. Variations within the United States are much less significant than differences between the United States and LDCs in Africa and Asia.

**WINE PRODUCTION.** The spatial distribution of wine production demonstrates that the environment plays a role in the distribution of popular as well as folk food customs. The distinctive character of a wine derives from a unique combination of soil, climate, and other physical characteristics at the place where the grapes are grown.

Vineyards are best cultivated in temperate climates of moderately cold, rainy winters and fairly long, hot summers. Hot, sunny weather is necessary in the summer for the fruit to mature properly, whereas winter is the preferred season for rain, because plant diseases that cause the fruit to rot are more active in hot, humid weather. Vineyards are planted on hillsides, if possible, to maximize exposure to sunlight and to facilitate drainage. A site near a lake or river is also desirable because water can temper extremes of temperature.

Grapes can be grown in a variety of soils, but the best wine tends to be produced from grapes grown in soil that is coarse and well drained—a soil not necessarily fertile for other crops. For example, the soil is generally sandy and gravelly in the Bordeaux wine region, chalky in Champagne country, and of slate composition in the Moselle Valley. The distinctive character of each region's wine is especially influenced by the unique combination of trace elements, such as boron, manganese, and zinc, in the rock or soil. In large quantities these



## CONTEMPORARY GEOGRAPHIC TOOLS

### Documenting House Types Through Fieldwork

Fieldwork has been regarded as an important geographic method since the development of geography as a modern science two centuries ago. Geographers head for destinations near and far—to bustling urban areas and to remote rural areas, within their own countries or abroad. Given their concern with regularities in space, geographers need to get out of their classrooms and laboratories to observe the visible elements of other places with their own eyes. Fieldwork has been especially important for understanding the unique character of a place or the collection of features that distinguish one region from another.

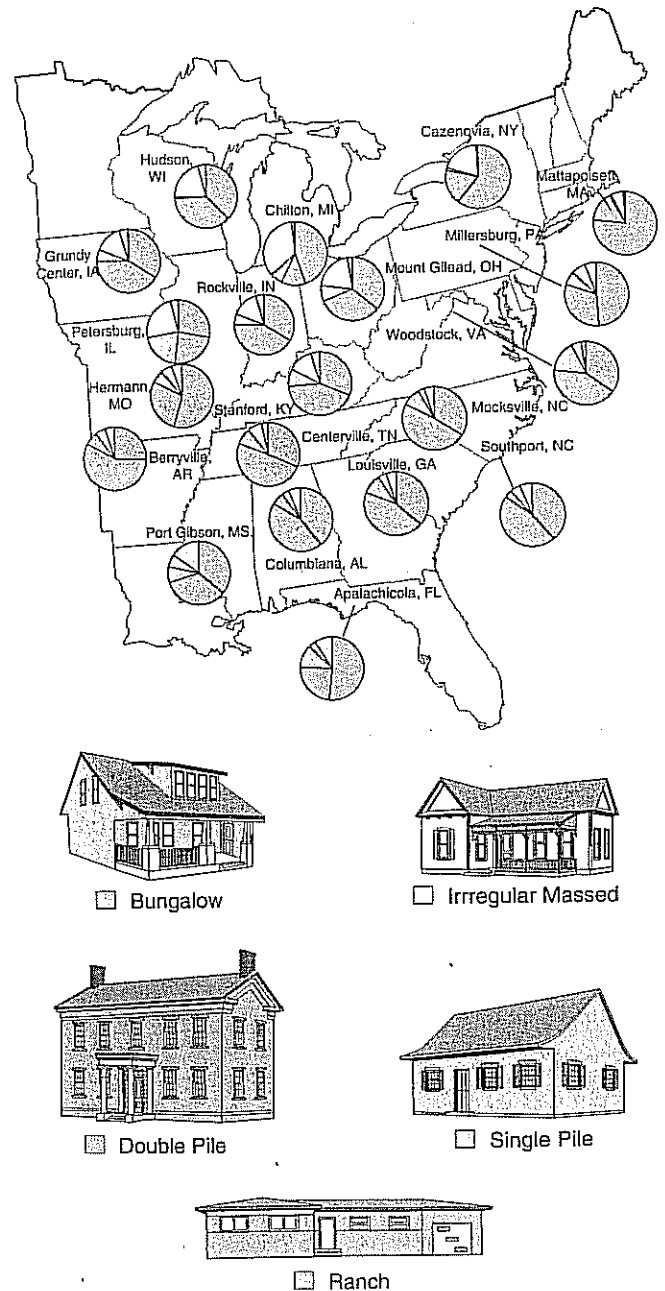
Geographers make use of fieldwork in two principal ways. First, collecting information in the field can be the basis for drawing conclusions about expected patterns. Second, observing conditions in the field can be a source of inspiration for thinking about problems to address in future scientific studies. In other words, fieldwork helps some geographers to *answer* questions and helps others to *ask* questions.

Especially well suited to field studies have been visible everyday elements of folk and popular culture, such as house styles. Statistical studies and questionnaires such as the census can help geographers determine the size and date of construction of a house, but not the style that inspired its design. Only by looking at a house can its style of design be classified. Field material can be collected by delineating one or more areas on a map and visiting the sites. Armed with a chart or a spreadsheet, the geographer counts the number of times that something appears in the area, such as a particular type of house.

According to fieldwork by geographers John Jakle, Robert Bastian, and Douglas Meyer, regional differences in the predominant type of house persist to some extent in the United States. Small towns in the southeastern United States were more likely to contain ranch houses. In northeastern small towns the most numerous style was the so-called double pile, which was two rooms wide and two rooms deep (Figure 4-1.1). Northeastern houses were larger, more likely to be painted white, and have garages, whereas southeastern houses were smaller, more likely to be painted beige or brown, and have carports. Differences in roofs, porches, and building materials also distinguish northeastern and southeastern houses.

Differences in housing among U.S. communities derive largely from differences in the time period in which the houses were built. The ranch house was more common in the Southeast primarily because the Southeast grew much more rapidly during the 1950s and 1960s, the period when the ranch house was especially popular. A housing development built in one region will resemble

more closely developments built at the same time elsewhere in the country than will developments built in the same region at other points in time.

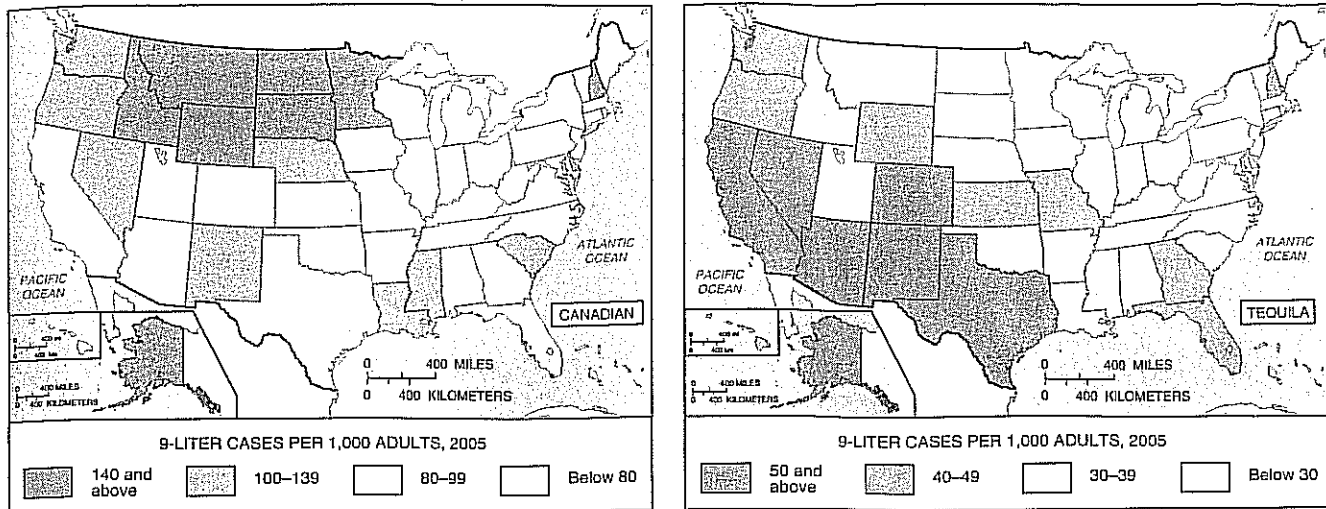


**FIGURE 4-1.1.** Regional differences in house types. Jakle, Bastian, and Meyer allocated the single-family housing in 20 small towns in the eastern United States into five groups: bungalow, double pile, irregularly massed, ranch, and single pile. Ranch houses were more common in the southeastern towns, whereas double-pile houses predominated in northeastern areas.

elements could destroy the plants, but in small quantities they lend a unique taste to the grapes.

Because of the unique product created by the distinctive soil and climate characteristics, the world's finest wines are most frequently identified by their place of origin. Wines may be

labeled with the region, town, district, or specific *estate*. A wine expert can determine the precise origin of a wine just by tasting because of the unique taste imparted to the grapes by the specific soil composition of each estate. (Similarly, a coffee expert can tell precisely where the beans were grown.)



**FIGURE 4-12** Per capita consumption of Canadian whiskey (left) and tequila (right). States that have a high incidence of consumption of Canadian whiskey are located in the north, along the Canadian border. States that have a high incidence of consumption of tequila are located in the south, along the Mexican border. Preference for Canadian whiskey has apparently diffused southward from Canada into the United States, and for tequila northward from Mexico.

The year of the harvest is also indicated on finer wines because specific weather conditions each year affect the quality and quantity of the harvest. Wines may also be identified by the variety of grape used rather than the location of the vineyard. Less expensive wines might contain a blend of grapes from a variety of estates and years.

Although grapes can be grown in a wide variety of locations, wine distribution is based principally on cultural values, both historical and contemporary. Wine is made today primarily in locations that have a tradition of excellence in making it and people who like to drink it and can afford to purchase it.

The social custom of wine production in much of France and Italy extends back at least to the Roman Empire. Wine consumption declined after the Fall of Rome, and many vineyards were destroyed. Monasteries preserved the wine-making tradition in medieval Europe for both sustenance and ritual. Wine consumption has become extremely popular again in Europe in recent centuries, as well as in the Western Hemisphere, which was colonized by Europeans. Vineyards are now typically owned by private individuals and corporations rather than religious organizations.

Wine production is discouraged in regions of the world dominated by religions other than Christianity (Figure 4-13). Hindus and Muslims in particular avoid alcoholic beverages. Thus wine production is limited in the Middle East (other than Israel) and southern Asia primarily because of cultural values, especially religion. The distribution of wine production shows that the diffusion of popular customs depends less on the distinctive environment of a location than on the presence of beliefs, institutions, and material traits conducive to accepting those customs.

## Role of Television in Diffusing Popular Culture

Watching television is an especially significant popular custom for two reasons. First, it is the most popular leisure activity in MDCs throughout the world. Second, television is the most

important mechanism by which knowledge of popular culture, such as professional sports, is rapidly diffused across Earth.

## Diffusion of Television

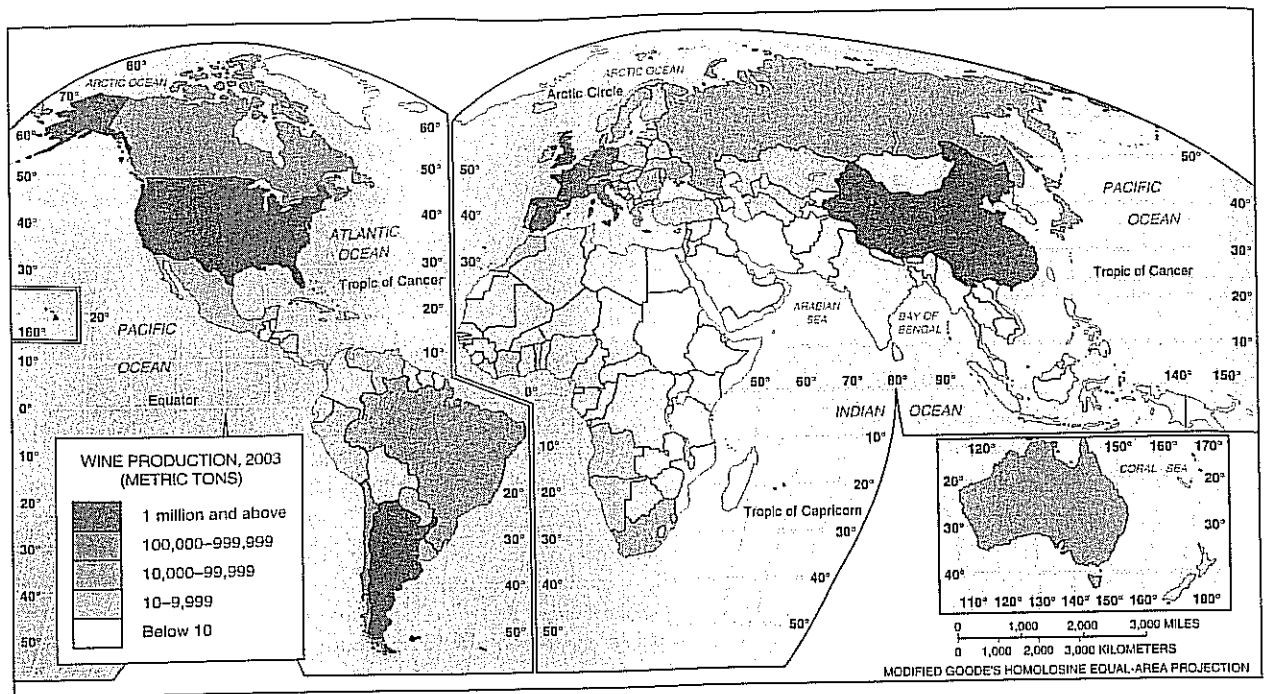
Television technology was developed simultaneously in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union, as well as the United States, but in the early years of broadcasting the United States held a near monopoly. Through the second half of the twentieth century, television diffused from the United States, first to Europe and other MDCs, then to LDCs.

The U.S. public first saw television in the 1930s, but its diffusion was blocked for a number of years when broadcasting was curtailed or suspended entirely during World War II. With the end of World War II, the number of television sets increased rapidly in the United States, from 10,000 in 1945 to 1 million in 1949, 10 million in 1951, and 50 million in 1959.

In 1954, for example, the first year that the United Nations published data on the subject, the United States had 86 percent of the world's 37 million TV sets, the United Kingdom 9 percent, the Soviet Union and Canada 2 percent each, and a handful of other countries (primarily Cuba, Mexico, France, and Brazil) the remainder. The United States had approximately 200 TV sets per 1,000 inhabitants in 1954, and the rest of the world had approximately 2 per 1,000 (Figure 4-14, top).

In 1970, the United States still had far more TV sets per capita than any other country except Canada (Figure 4-14, middle). However, rapid growth of ownership in Europe meant that the share of the world's sets in the United States had declined to one-fourth. Still, in 1970, half of the countries in the world, including most of those in Africa and Asia, had little or no TV broadcasting.

By the end of the twentieth century, international differences in TV ownership had diminished, although had not disappeared.



**FIGURE 4-13** Annual wine production. The distribution of wine production is influenced in part by the physical environment and in part by social customs. Most grapes used for wine are grown near the Mediterranean Sea or in areas of similar climate. Income, preferences, and other social customs also influence the distribution of wine consumption, as seen in the lower production levels of predominantly Muslim countries south of the Mediterranean.

altogether (Figure 4-14, bottom). The United States still had a much higher level of television ownership than the world as a whole, but so did Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. Meanwhile, ownership rates climbed sharply between 1970 and 2000 in LDCs, such as in China from less than 1 per 1,000 to 304 per 1,000 and in Indonesia from less than 1 per 1,000 to 154 per 1,000.

## Diffusion of the Internet

The diffusion of Internet service follows the pattern established by television a generation earlier, but at a more rapid pace. There were 40 million Internet users worldwide in 1995, including 25 million in the United States, and Internet service had not yet reached most countries (Figure 4-15, top).

Between 1995 and 2000, Internet usage increased rapidly in the United States, from 9 percent to 44 percent of the population. But the increase was much greater in the rest of the world, from 40 million Internet users in 1995 to 400 million in 2000. As Internet usage diffused rapidly, the U.S. share declined rapidly, from 62 percent of the world total in 1995 to 31 percent in 2000 (Figure 4-15, middle).

In the first years of the twenty-first century, Internet usage further diffused rapidly. World usage more than doubled in 4 years, from 400 million in 2000 to 880 million in 2004. U.S. usage continued to increase, but at a more modest rate, to 63 percent of the population. As a result, the share of the world's Internet users found in the United States continued to decline, to 21 percent in 2004 (Figure 4-15, bottom).

Given the history of television, the Internet is likely to diffuse rapidly to other countries in the years ahead. Other than the

United States, relatively high rates of Internet hosts were in MDCs (Japan, Canada, and Western Europe) and only a tenth were in LDCs. Among less developed regions, Latin America and Asia are likely to expand Internet hosts more rapidly than Africa.

Note that all six maps in Figures 4-14 and 4-15 use the same classifications and colors. For example, the highest class in all maps is 300 or more per 1,000. What is different is the time interval. The diffusion of television from the United States to the rest of the world took a half-century, whereas the diffusion of the Internet has taken only a decade.

## Government Control of Television

In the United States most television stations are owned by private corporations, which receive licenses from the government to operate at specific frequencies (channels). The company makes a profit by selling air time for advertisements. Some stations, however, are owned by local governments or other nonprofit organizations and are devoted to educational or noncommercial programs.

The U.S. pattern of private commercial stations is found in other Western Hemisphere countries but is rare elsewhere in the world. In nearly all developed countries other than the United States, broadcasting is provided entirely or in part by a public corporation or by a public-private partnership. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) receives government grants, whereas the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Japan's Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) are funded through license fees paid by owners of TV sets. Independence from government interference is guaranteed in their charters. Commercial channels co-exist with public channels in many of these countries.